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SUBJECT: MFA STATE MINISTER HOYER DEFENDS WITHDRAWAL OF
TACTICAL NUKES, NEW CFE INITIATIVES

Classified By: AMBASSADOR PHILIP D. MURPHY. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY. MFA State Minister Werner Hoyer strongly defended the new government's commitment to seek the withdrawal of all remaining nuclear weapons from Germany during a November 10 meeting with EUR A/S Phil Gordon and Ambassador Murphy, arguing that there was not one credible scenario in which tactical nuclear weapons could be usefully deployed. He emphasized the seriousness of the commitment by noting that it would be one of the benchmarks by which the government would ultimately be judged. Hoyer said equivalent efforts should be made on conventional arms control and to that end, called for more creativity in bringing the Russians back on board with CFE. Hoyer expected that Germany would increase its contributions to Afghanistan after the upcoming international conference, but said it was too soon to talk about numbers. He claimed the Dutch may take on new responsibilities in the north after withdrawing from Uruzgan. Given the strong leftward shift of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Hoyer thought it was unlikely that former FM Steinmeier would stay on much longer as parliamentary caucus chairman. END SUMMARY.

TACTICAL NUKES

2. (C) Gordon noted that up to now, FM Westerwelle had said all the right things about needing to go to NATO to address the proposal for the withdrawal of all remaining nuclear weapons from Germany. However, it was not clear whether Germany had thought through all the broader ramifications of its proposal. Gordon noted that the withdrawal could lead some to conclude that the U.S. was un-committing from Europe and further undermine confidence in Article 5 among newer NATO members. Withdrawal from Germany would also put other host nations in a politically difficult position, especially those like Turkey, who favored keeping the weapons. Once this becomes a public debate, no government may be able to withstand the pressure to have the weapons withdrawn.

3. (C) Hoyer responded that during the coalition negotiations, defenders of the status quo could not come up with one credible scenario in which tactical nuclear weapons could be usefully deployed. Therefore, he argued, the supposed deterrence of these weapons was meaningless. Hoyer insisted that he took Article 5 seriously, but thought there were better, more credible ways of providing the required deterrence. He admitted, however, that the Baltic air policing mission, for example, and other initiatives like it, had proven insufficient for the newer Allies. He acknowledged the large stockpile of Russian tactical nuclear weapons, calling them pure nonsense, but did not condition withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons from Germany with reciprocal cuts by Russia. Hoyer said the commitment to seek the withdrawal of nuclear weapons was one of the top 10 to 15 benchmarks by which the new government would ultimately be measured. Therefore, its importance should not be

underestimated.

CFE

14. (C) Hoyer thought it was important to balance nuclear arms control with continued efforts on the conventional side to avoid giving the impression that the build-up of conventional armaments was less important. He called for more creativity in finding a way out of the deadlock over the CFE Treaty. Toward that end, the MFA favored new initiatives that would force the Russians to respond and not allow them to continue to blame NATO for the impasse. Gordon pointed out that even if one were to take the Georgia issue off the table, the continued Russian demand for abolishing flank limits is unacceptable to many Allies and probably could not pass muster in Congress.

EUROPEAN SECURITY TREATY AND OSCE SUMMIT

15. (C) Hoyer said that in addressing the Medvedev proposal, it is was important to stick to current European security structures, noting that without the Helsinki Process, the previous night's celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall would have never been possible. While open to possible reforms of the OSCE, Hoyer shared U.S. skepticism about the need for a new treaty. He also agreed that an OSCE Summit hosted by Kazakhstan was hard to justify, given Kazakhstan's human rights record and the lack of substance to discuss.

AFGHANISTAN

16. (C) Asked what the prospects were of Germany doing more in

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Afghanistan, Hoyer said he agreed with the U.S. approach that it was important to first define the objective and then figure out the strategy before deciding on resources. In this regard, Germany viewed the upcoming conference as key for establishing the necessary basis for the international community's continued engagement in Afghanistan. Hoyer said he expected that Germany would probably end up having to do some topping up in all fields, military as well as civilian, but it was too soon to talk about specific numbers yet. Based on a recent visit to the Netherlands, Hoyer was hopeful of getting the Dutch involved in the north of Afghanistan. He said they felt bad about their upcoming exit from Uruzgan in the south and seemed eager to do something to compensate for that.

GRIM FUTURE FOR STEINMEIER

17. (C) Hoyer said that now that the Social Democrats are in opposition, they would forget extremely quickly what positions they used to support and move to the left. As a result, he thought it was unlikely that former FM Steinmeier would survive very long as the new chair of the SPD parliamentary caucus. The new designated party chairman and secretary general have completely disassociated themselves from the old SPD leadership and its policies. Hoyer said that if the new leadership stayed on its current course, Steinmeier, who was the SPD policy mastermind over the past 10 years, could only stay on by repudiating almost everything he had stood for.

MURPHY